

Reality sets in for North End as Red blast their way to next round Rival Hamline is next in winner's bracket final

By Greg Schmidt

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Upsets were aplenty in the first four games of the Fourth District playoffs, but the Red (29-8) left no doubt in the fifth tilt that the top seed will have none of it in their 14-1 trouncing of upstart North End July 26 at Midway Stadium.

Prior to the Red's game (they received a bye in the first round single elimination), Hamline had sneaked by North St. Paul 5-4 in the first winner's bracket semi. Second-seeded Rosetown had their season cut short by seventh-seeded North End (5-15) the day before in the knockout round.

"North End came in loose and we hadn't played yet, but we're the defending champ. We just went out and played our kind of game," manager Jeff Larsen said.

It was the kind of game North End was familiar with — another big loss to the Red.

The nine-inning playoff tilt was trimmed to seven after a fast start and blistering fifth when the Red did the dish tap seven times to double their 7-1 score.

They collected nearly half of their 18 hits highlighted by an RBI double from Bjorn Anderson (3 for 4, SB, 2B, RBI), a two-run single by Billy Gazich (2 for 5, 2B, 2-RBI) and a two-run double from Derek McCallum (2 for 3, 2-2B, BB, 3-RBI). Erik Anderson (1 for 4, RBI) and Chase Traeger (3 for 3, BB, RBI) followed with RBI singles. Also with multiple hits: Blake Searles (3 for 4, 2B, 2-RBI) and Brian Marshik (2 for 3, SAC, BB, 2-RBI).

"The kids hit the ball hard," Larsen said. "Even their outs were hit hard."

The win over North End is the Red's fourth in as many games this summer. Surprisingly, it wasn't the biggest margin. They defeated North End 22-0 on Father's Day.

Red starter Seth Rosin fanned six while scattering four hits over five innings. Brandon Porten and Erik Fiegel each had an inning of relief in preparation for the remainder of the mandated nine-inning postseason games. "It was ideal to get them both in and get some work . . . we're going to need them with the nine-inning games," said Larsen.

The Red advances to the winner's bracket final at North St. Paul for a meeting with Hamline at 8 p.m. Hamline was the only district team to defeat the Red this summer.

"All three games we had already were tough games," Larsen said. "I think it'll be [like that again]. They'll be out after us and they've got a lot of those college players back [for the playoffs]."

Fourth District winner's bracket semifinal, July 26, 2006
Tri-City Red 14, North End 1, 7 inn. (Game 37)

NE	0	0	0	1	0	0	—	1	6	0	
TC	2	2	0	3	7	0	x	—	14	18	0

Davoli, Leitner (4), S. Paitich (4) and Nins (6) and Weiner; Rosin, Porten (6), Fiegel (7) and Field. W-Rosin (6-1). L-Davoli (1-5).